

Message Text

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ACTION PM-07

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ISO-00 EB-11 L-03 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

RSC-01 FCC-03 OTP-02 CG-00 DOTE-00 USIA-15 OC-06

CCO-00 DRC-01 /071 W

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P R 070740Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1625

INFO NAVELELEXSYSCOM FOR PME-119

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

DOD/ISA WASHDC

CNO WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 4955

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, AS, US

SUBJ: PROJECT OMEGA: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON INTER-
NATIONAL SUPERVISION OF SYSTEM

REF: STATE A-6297

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: EMBOFFS MET WITH FLOOD OF DFA WITH REGARD TO DFA PRESENTATION ON OMEGA WHICH FLOOD WILL MAKE BEFORE JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE. FLOOD REQUESTED DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT USG THINKING ABOUT FORM OF INTERNATIONAL SUPERVISION OF OPERATION OF SYSTEM. HE ALREADY HAS COPY OF RESULTS OF FIRST OMEGA COORDINATING COMMITTEE TRANSMITTED REPAIR. IN COURSE OF CONVERSATION, EMBOFFS WERE ASKED FOR THEIR REACTION TO POSSIBLE EFFECT ON U.S.-AUSTRALIAN RELATIONS SHOULD AUSTRALIA NOT PARTICIPATE IN OMEGA. EMBOFFS RESPONDED THAT WHILE OMEGA IS CERTAINLY NOT AT THE CENTER OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS, U.S. IS TRYING TO DEVELOP GLOBAL NAVIGATIONAL AID SYSTEM AND WOULD OF COURSE BE DISAPPOINTED BY AUSTRALIAN FAILURE TO PARTICIPATE. IF REJECTION WAS ON BASIS OF AUSTRALIAN RELUCTANCE TO
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JOIN WITH U.S. IN NEW (SUPPOSEDLY) DEFENSE-RELATED

PROJECT, WE FELT THAT THIS PRECEDENT COULD BE MOST UNFORTUNATE FOR FUTURE COOPERATIVE EFFORTS UNDER ANZUS ALLIANCE. END SUMMARY.

2. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT DEPARTMENT PROVIDE BY COB SEPT 10 WASHINGTON TIME CURRENT DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED INTERNATIONAL SUPERVISION OF OMEGA SYSTEM.

3. DURING CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFFS, PHILLIP FLOOD, ASST. SECRETARY ECONOMIC POLICY BRANCH, DFA, ASKED FOR INFORMATION REGARDING CURRENT PLANS FOR INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION IN SUPERVISION OF OMEGA SYSTEM ONCE IT IS ESTABLISHED. FLOOD COMMENTED THAT PARLIAMETARY AND PUBLIC RESISTANCE TO OMEGA WOULD BE REDUCED BY KNOWLEDGE THAT SYSTEM WOULD BE UNDER INTERNATIONAL SUPERVISION, PARTICULARLY SINCE EXCHANGES BETWEEN U.S. AND GOA (WHICH NOW AVAILABLE TO PARLIAMENT) SHOWED DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TWO GOVERNMENTS ON THIS POINT. IN THIS CONNECTION HE NOTED THAT ORIGINALLY USG HAD PROPOSED THAT ALL PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES PROVIDE A REPRESENTATIVE FOR GROUP TO BE BASED AT HAWAII STATION ON PERMANENT BASIS TO MONITOR OMEGA SYSTEM AND PROVIDE MORE-OR-LESS CONTINUOUS REVIEW OF SYSTEM'S OPERATIONS. FLOOD REFERRED TO MORE RECENT INFORMATION PROVIDED TO DFA BY EMBASSY THAT USG HAS APPARENTLY "DRAWN BACK" FROM THIS PROPOSAL TO POSITION THAT INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION IN SYSTEM'S SUPERVISION WOULD BE CONFINED TO PERIODIC MEETINGS OF REPS OF PARTICIPATING GOVERNMENTS. HE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR COPY OF REFAIR WHICH EMBASSY HAS PROVIDED TO DFA ON FIRST MEETING OF OMEGA COORDINATING COMMITTEE IN WASHINGTON IN JUNE.

4. FLOOD DESCRIBED DFA PRESENTATION TO COMMITTEE, WHICH MAY BE MADE AS EARLY AS SEPT 12, AS "NEUTRAL" BY DIRECTION OF MINISTER FOR STATE WILLESEE WHO HANDLES DFA MATTERS ON DAY-TO-DAY BASIS FOR FOREIGN MINISTER WHITLAM. STRATEGY IN DEPARTMENTAL SUBMISSIONS BEFORE JOINT COMMITTEE, HE SAID, IS TO ALLOW DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT TO TAKE LEAD IN SUPPORTING CONFIDENTIAL

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AUSTRALIAN PARTICIPATION IN OMEGA.

5. IN RESPONSE TO FLOOD'S QUESTION ABOUT EFFECT ON U.S.-AUSTRALIAN RELATIONS SHOULD AUSTRALIA NOT PARTICIPATE IN OMEGA, EMBOFFS MADE FOLLOWING POINTS: A) WHILE OMEGA IS OBVIOUSLY NOT AT THE CENTER OF U.S.-AUSTRALIAN BILATERAL RELATIONSHIPS, U.S. IS ENDEAVORING TO BUILD EFFECTIVE GLOBAL NAVIGATIONAL AID SYSTEM AND WOULD BE

DISAPPOINTED BY AUSTRALIAN REJECTION. B) IN EVENT OF AUSTRALIAN REJECTION, NATIONAL AND PUBLIC TREATMENT WOULD BE MOST IMPORTANT. IF REJECTION WERE BASED ON AUSTRALIAN RELUCTANCE TO JOIN WITH U.S. IN DEFENCE-RELATED PROJECT, A MOST UNFORTUNATE PRECEDENT FOR FUTURE BILATERAL COOPERATION IN DEFENCE PROJECTS UNDER ANZUS ALLIANCE MIGHT BE SET. FLOOD SAID THAT DFA AND DEPARTMENT DEFENCE WERE PAINFULLY AWARE OF THIS POINT.

6. FLOOD PRESENTED EMBOFFS WITH COPY OF DFA CABLE TO AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON DATED AUG 28, CONTAINING NINE QUESTIONS ABOUT OMEGA RAISED DURING JOINT COMMITTEE'S FIRST SESSION LAST WEEK. IN PASSING, FLOOD NOTED DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT SUBMISSION MADE BY FIRST ASSISTANT SECRETARY UNKLES ON AUG 28 WAS "FIRST CLASS". COPIES OF DEPARTMENTAL STATEMENTS TO COMMITTEE WILL BE PROVIDED TO DEPARTMENT AS SOON AS AVAILABLE FROM COMMITTEE. DRAFT COPY OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS RESULTING FROM UNKLE'S APPEARANCE BEING TRANSMITTED BY AIR POUCH.

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